

# DLA Senior Executives Earn Presidential Rank Awards



**F**ORT BELVOIR, Va. – Two Defense Logistics Agency senior executives accepted 1997 Presidential Rank Awards May 5 from the Vice President in a Washington, D.C., ceremony.

Gary S. Thurber, Deputy Commander, Defense Contract Management Command, DLA, received the Distinguished Executive Award.

Alton C. Ressler, Director, DLA Corporate Administration, received the Meritorious Executive Award.

Thurber and Ressler were two of 287 members of the Federal Government's Senior Executive Service to receive the prestigious awards. Both the Distinguished and Meritorious Executive Awards are presented annually for sustained exceptional performance resulting in less-expensive and better service to the public.

Vice President Al Gore presented the awards at the Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall. Gore said the recipients "epitomize the very best of public service. These award winners have pioneered efforts that helped save American taxpayers more than \$260 billion."

In the Distinguished Executive Award citation, Thurber was recognized as a "leader and innovator within the Department of Defense acquisition and logistics communities.

"Throughout his career, [he] has been at the forefront of Department-wide issues and initiatives," the citation continues, "whether investigating and resolving major acquisition systems problems or pursuing and implementing key reform activities. He has not only redefined DLA's mission priorities to enhance efficiency and effectiveness, he has been a singularly effective catalyst for Acquisition Reform at the highest levels within the Department of Defense and industry.

"Rarely has an individual had such a profoundly positive impact in so many areas – whether contract administration, contracting, logistics, or corporate administration. His blend of raw intellect, discipline, dedication, and interpersonal skills sets him apart from all but a select few of his peers," the citation stated.

"Gary Thurber has been instrumental in this Command's successful implementation of a number of acquisition initiatives, including the Single Process Initiative, which have brought the Department of Defense millions of dollars through cost avoidances and savings," said Air Force Maj. Gen. Timothy Malishenko, Commander of the Defense Contract Management Command.

"Through his executive leadership in DCMC and the Defense Logistics Agency [where he served as the Director of Corporate Administration], he's overseen a number of improvements to business processes and organizational structures – all of which have resulted in better ways of doing business."

Thurber was awarded the prestigious DoD Distinguished Civilian [Service] Medal in January 1998 and the Meritorious Executive Award in 1995. Prior to becoming Deputy Command[er] of DCMC in 1995, Thurber served for more than two years as DLA's Deputy Director, Corporate Administration.

As the DCMC Deputy Commander, Thurber helps lead a worldwide Command of 14,000 contracting professionals providing contract management services to the Department of Defense and other federal agencies.

The Defense Contract Management Command manages more than 360,000 prime contracts worth more than \$900 billion, covering more than 23,000 contractors around the world. Its mission is to provide customer-focused contract management services – throughout the acquisition life cycle – around the clock, around the world.

In the Meritorious Executive Award citation, Ressler was noted as a "forceful advocate of lean logistics and has brought extraordinary energy to DLA's business process re-engineering effort. He has taken the vision of a lean, dynamic organization and worked to build one that works better and costs less."

As the Director of DLA's Corporate Administration, Ressler is responsible for running the agency's programs in human resources, security, safety, strategic planning, environmental protection, communications, and contingency operations. His citation notes that his expertise in organization and human resource management has allowed DLA to reduce civilian personnel by 20,000 between 1992 and 1996 (almost one-third of the total workforce).... These reductions reduced annual labor expenses by \$1 billion.

The purpose of the Presidential Rank Award Program is to recognize career SES members who have demonstrated exceptional performance over an extended period of time. The Distinguished Executive Award is limited to one percent of the career SES government-wide. It includes a lump-sum payment of \$20,000, a distinctive gold pin, and a framed certificate signed by the President. The Meritorious Executive Award is limited to 5 percent of the career SES government-wide. It includes a lump-sum payment of \$10,000, a distinctive silver pin, and a framed certificate signed by the President.

The Defense Logistics Agency is a logistics combat support agency whose primary role is to provide supplies and services to America's military forces worldwide. DLA's mission includes managing over four million consumable items, processing more than 30 million annual distribution actions, and administering over \$900 billion of DoD and other agency contracts.

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